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FBIS Proposals for Agenda for Joint Committee Meeting, 29 April 1958

I. Arabic Coverage

1. FBIS plans expansion at Kyrenia.
2. Concerned over BBC elimination Satellite Arabic Coverage - propaganda analysis hampered.
3. Yeravan in Arabic - less reticent than Moscow on inter-Arab disputes.

II. Russian Coverage

1. Can BBC further expand Russian coverage in face of still further increases in volume of Russian broadcasts to meet FBIS needs for material in next year to 18 months? (Would undoubtedly require added staff)
2. What is BBC doing on TASS Russian radioteletype?

III. Teheran and Stockholm Material

1. Could BBC provide greater coverage in depth of fewer programs? FBIS feels its economic abstract requirements inadequately met from these two sources. (For example, Hokkaido abstract per broadcast production is 38 times that of Stockholm or Teheran; 7.6 items per broadcast vs. 1/5 item per broadcast.)
2. Speedup of service?
3. Emergency processing at Santa Rosa is possible. Would it be worthwhile?
4. Reduce coverage same stations as Kyrenia? Although different programs, FBIS feels concentration on other stations more productive.

IV. Levels of Soviet-Satellite Coverage

1. Major changes in monitoring levels affect propaganda analysis inferences. Immediate notification would assist FBIS.

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2. Coverage of Moscow to Satellites important to FBIS - can it be expanded?

V. African Monitoring

1. Reassessment of consumer requirements in mid-1958 by FBIS. BBC views will be solicited.
2. Possibility depending on requirements, of FBIS resurrecting African monitoring proposals.

VI. Cyprus

1. Diplomatic Status for FBIS requested through Dept. of State.
2. Emergency relocation near Istanbul - only as last resort, but FBIS is planning for it if necessary and might ask BBC assistance at Caversham.
3. Could BBC handle communication Istanbul-London?

VII. FBIS Communications Procedures

1. Allocated channels now in operation:  
London - Washington and Tokyo - Washington.  
Tokyo - Okinawa in May.
2. Still having difficulties in Far East, but expect improvement.  
Will request BBC views after Phase IV.

VIII. Scandinavian Coverage

1. FBIS coverage discontinued and wholly relying on BBC.

IX. Indonesian Monitoring

1. FBIS emergency coverage from Saigon or Singapore in abeyance, but may do if Sumatran situation continues unsettled.

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Other items for discussion with Head, BBC Monitoring Service:

1. Mirror Broadcasts
2. Standardization of Transliteration - FBIS requests BBC use findings of Board of Geographic Names.
3. Japanese coverage (if raised by Campbell)
4. Lift at Caversham?
5. Can BBC issue periodic overall coverage schedules more frequently?  
Monthly would help.

TO : Chief, FBIS

DATE: 25 March 1958

FROM : Chief, Editorial Branch

SUBJECT: Suggested Topics for FBIS/BBC Coordination Meeting.

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1. Standardization of Russian transliteration.

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Although BBC was adamant on the necessity of strictly adhering to the standards established by the Board of Geographical Names and the British Permanent Committee for Geographical Names with respect to Arabic transliteration, it violates the rules established by these two boards when it comes to Russian transliteration. I think it would be appropriate now to explore the possibility of agreement on the spelling of Russian names.

2. Allocation of coverage of Arabic-language programs.

Editors feel that there is too much needless duplication of Medbuero and BBC coverage of some North African programs while monitoring of Soviet satellite broadcasts in Arabic are slighted because of resulting BBC "shortages of personnel."

3. Procedure for BBC processing of flash news items.

*London*

*Ru* It is felt that a great improvement is possible in BBC's method of reporting flash news items so that appropriate FYI's can be filed much more expeditiously on the FBIS wire.

4. Communications Procedure

The consensus here is that the BBC officials should be given a thorough indoctrination on the FBIS allocated channel procedures as they are performed in Washington, with particular emphasis on the problems involved in routing and relaying traffic from the Far East. The proper procedure for filing requests for missing messages should be clarified: In many cases messages fail to reach the BBC simply because Far East bureaus forget to include the indicator "WLA RELAY FOR BBC." The discussion would provide an opportunity to explain to the BBC that it must not wait a week before requesting reruns of missing messages, since by that time the Bureau will probably have discarded its tapes (Headquarters immediately discards all tapes not routed for BBC relays.)

Reruns should also be requested promptly, since a request for a refile of an old item on occasion means that all subsequent items must be refiled with consequent loss of considerable filing time.

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5. Tour of Army Communications Center at the Pentagon.

Such a tour would impress BBC officials with the importance of proper procedure.

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# Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, FBID

DATE: 1 April 1958

FROM : Acting Chief, RPB

SUBJECT: Notes on BBC Coordination Meeting

1. East European Broadcasts in Arabic

BBC reductions in the coverage of Arabic broadcasts from the East European communist transmitters deprives RPB analysts of the opportunity of making over-all assessments of Communist-bloc propaganda broadcast to the Arabs. If we are to carry out this function adequately, restoration of relatively full coverage will be desirable. At the very minimum, we should seek to obtain coverage of one or two of these broadcasts each week from Prague and from Sofia.

2. Yerevan Broadcasts in Arabic

Yerevan broadcasts in Arabic are now being recorded by the Mediterranean Bureau and mailed to the East Coast Bureau for processing. Preliminary investigation indicates that Yerevan Arabic is less reticent than Moscow Arabic on inter-Arab disputes. A talk on 5 March attacked the Arab Federation, long before Moscow had done so in Arabic broadcasts. A talk on 6 March discussed the Saudi plot against Nasir, which Moscow has not done yet. Under current processing arrangements, the content of these shows was not known until 20 March. Coverage of one show per day from this show, either by London or Medburo, would undoubtedly improve our reports regarding the Soviet position on the Middle East.

3. Coverage Reports and Minimum Coverage Requirements:

In January 1957, just after we had issued a report (Moscow Broadcasts to Hungary) that included inferences based on the content of Moscow broadcasts to the East European satellites, it was noted that less than one third of Moscow's Hungarian broadcasts were being regularly covered by the BBC. At the time, RPB analysts had assumed that coverage had remained at the usual level of 66 percent or more. The BBC has on several occasions made changes in their coverage schedules without immediately notifying FBIS, in spite of numerous requests that they do so. The Chief, London Bureau, protested the above-mentioned example of unreported coverage changes and the coverage of Moscow Hungarian was restored. However, the numerous instances of unreported changes make it advisable to discuss the question again.

There is another problem related to the Moscow Hungarian broadcasts cited above: While FBIS and the BBC have an agreement, in theory, that coverage changes are to be reported immediately, there are, so far as I know, no formal limits placed on the extent to which coverage may be altered or reduced. Strictly speaking there are continuing limitations on extreme coverage alterations in the form of FBIS-BBC mutual interests in reporting world events and BBC has been most cooperative in keeping FBIS well informed regarding long-term coverage reductions necessitated by the budget reductions or personnel shortages.

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The real problem is that, for short-term periods, the BBC is considerably more informal than FBIS about coverage requirements. During my tour of duty in London there were numerous occasions wherein the BBC cut coverage of individual Moscow foreign-language broadcasts to as little as 15 percent. This problem would be solved by placing agreed minimum-coverage levels on Moscow broadcasts in foreign languages. Perhaps it would be preferable to specify minimums only for the major languages. RPB and the Field Operations Staff have discussed this problem on several occasions, but have never arrived at an agreed position. That of course will have to be done prior to the Coordination Meeting.



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NOTES ON AFRICAN COVERAGE

Lack of FBIS and BBC capabilities for monitoring broadcasts from and to African areas south of the Arabic-speaking nations continues to create a large gap in FBIS coverage. Outside interest in the area is evidenced by the average of three new requests weekly since the first of the year from OCI and the State Department for FBIS material on specific targets in that area. At the present time AFP and REUTERS are virtually the only sources of material available to FBIS in servicing these requests.

These inadequacies in monitoring capabilities also extend to Egyptian broadcasts in African languages, including the Radio Free Africa clandestine broadcasts. There have been repeated requests for information on such broadcasts which FBIS could not fill. Recently the BBC dropped all but watch coverage of Radio Free Africa in favor of coverage of Cairo in Swahili by its single Swahili monitor.

Such lack of capability, coupled with a shortage of Arabic-language monitors, has resulted in serious deficiencies in coverage of Middle East and African areas where resurgent nationalism is becoming ever more evident.



Tokyo Bureau Coverage of Japanese Broadcasts

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BBC in the past has expressed interest in fuller coverage of Japanese radios, stemming from that organization's inability to exploit newspapers and press agency sources (other than KYODO). It should be emphasized that BBC interests are under constant consideration by the FBIS staff at the Tokyo Bureau. It is believed, however, that any further expansion of voicecast commitments could only be brought about at the Bureau with a concomitant reduction in coverage of the vernacular press and editorial opinion expressed therein, which would be contrary to the interests of FBIS and its consumers.

Although BBC made a great issue out of the necessity of adhering closely to the standards for Arabic transliteration agreed upon by the American Board of Geographical Names and the British Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, the BBC violates many of the standards established by the same joint decision on Russian transliteration.

The following are some of the discrepancies we have noticed:

BBC nearly always omits the BGN-required Ye for the initial Russian E. Very few Russian names begin with the "backward E" (e oborotnaya) which according to BGN rules does begin with E only. This discrepancy from BGN style occurs in both first and surnames, most place names, and also within words, where BGN style requires a ye when the e is preceded by a vowel.

Nearly all BBC name endings which are inflected are rendered in what is incorrect style, per BGN rules. Nearly all inflected masculine Russian surnames must have either iy or yy endings, which in BGN transliteration style represent the Russian i and short i (i kratkaya), for the iy ending, and the Russian yuri and short i for yy endings. BBC normally uses a simple y ending, making no distinction between the two different endings. Several basic generic terms, e. g., krai (BBC-krai), rayon (BBC-raion or sometimes rayon) and composite words, such as krayispolkom and rayispolkom (BBC-kraispolkom and raispolkom) are at variance with the BGN system.

The vowels for BGN i, y, and y meaning yuri are not followed consistently by BBC within proper names as well.

The letter j is sometimes used by BBC for what in Russian transliteration per BGN should be Ya or Yu, as well as for what is often Dzh in BGN system.

The BBC also sometimes uses C to transliterate the Russian letter rendered as Ts by BGN rules, especially for names in the Baltic republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.

One misuse of the ye which stands out, is almost consistent use of Byelorussian instead of what is properly, per BGN, Belorussian. This is inconsistent with BBC's own practice of not using ye for other Russian initial e's. There are many other examples, most of which can be solved or at least improved by acquainting London editors and BBC monitors with the BGN transliteration system. Copies of this system can be obtained from the Board of Geographic Names, Dept. of Interior, or through the Chief, FDD.